

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 0898

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS CG

SUBJ: DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE OF YOUTH LEAGUE MADE PART OF THE
GENDARMERIE

1. SUMMARY: ON JAN 19, PRES MOBUTU SIGNED AN ORDINANCE INTEGRATING THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE OF THE YOUTH LEAGUE (BRIGADE DISCIPLINAIRE DE LA JMPR) INTO THE NATIONAL POLICE FORCE (GENDARMERIE). WHILE THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF CRIME IN ZAIRE WOULD SEEM TO JUSTIFY INCREASED POLICE ACTIVITIES, PREVIOUS MOVES TO GIVE THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE OF THE JMPR EVEN QUASI-POLICE FUNCTIONS HAVE LED TO NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS OF EXTORTION AND OTHER ABUSES OF AUTHORITY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE OF THE JMPR WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1968. AS PART OF AN OVERALL REORGANIZATION OF THE JMPR IN 1975, THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE WAS DECLARED TO BE THE PARAMILITARY UNIT OF THAT YOUTH ORGANIZATION. IT WAS GIVEN TWO RESPONSIBILITIES: TO ENSURE PARTY DISCIPLINE; AND TO PROVIDE AN ELITE CORPS OF TRAINED AND DISCIPLINED CADRE TO MAINTAIN "PERMANENT VIGILANCE" ON THE REVOLUTION.

3. THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE OPERATES AT THE GRASS ROOTS
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LEVEL: URBAN ZONES AND RURAL COLLECTIVES. FROM FEB 1975 UNTIL LATE IN 1976, THE BRIGADE RAN STREET PATROLS AT NIGHT DESIGNED TO COMBAT VANDALISM AND TO ENFORCE THE NIGHT-TIME CURFEW FOR CHILDREN UNDER 15. MEMBERS OF THE BRIGADE HAD NO LEGAL POWERS TO JUDGE ALLEGED MALEFACTORS, TO MAKE ARRESTS OR EVEN TO PERFORM IDENTITY CHECKS. YET NEWSPAPERS FROM THIS PERIOD CONTAINED VARIOUS ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS DESCRIBING ABUSES OF AUTHORITY:

UNJUSTIFIED LEVYING OF "FINES", OTHER FORMS OF CORRUPTION
ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND EVEN "TORTURE." THE SITUATION
APPARENTLY GOT SUFFICIENTLY OUT OF HAND THAT THE GOVT FINALLY
DID AWAY WITH THE AUXILIARY POLICE FUNCTIONS OF THE BRIGADE.

4. THE GOVT'S CURRENT REVERSAL OF THAT ACTION MAY WELL BE
BASED ON A DESIRE TO FIND A PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT FOR SOME OF
THE VOLATILE YOUTH WHO FORM THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE DISCIPLINARY
BRIGADE. THE SECGEN OF THE JMPR TOLD THE PRESS THAT
A PROGRAM HAD BEEN INSTITUTED IN FEB 1968 WHEREBY 200 MEMBERS OF
THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE FROM EACH OF THE COUNTRY'S NINE
REGIONS WERE TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES
EVERY YEAR. HOWEVER, THIS PROGRAM WAS NEVER IMPLEMENTED.
THE SECGEN WENT ON TO NOTE THAT A PROGRAM HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED
IN SEPT 1976 WHEREBY LEADERS OF THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE WOULD
BE SENT TO THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE GENDARMERIE AT MATETE
TO BECOME AGENTS OR OFFICERS OF THE JUDICIAL POLICE.
HOWEVER THE SHABA WAR PREVENTED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROGRAM
AND LED TO THE DECISION TO INTEGRATE THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE
INTO THE GENDARMERIE.

6. CONCLUSION: PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO FIND CAREERS FOR MEMBERS
OF THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE CAME TO NAUGHT AND THE SAME MAY
BE TRUE ON THIS OCCASION. HOWEVER, ANY ATTEMPTS TO RETURN
POLICE POWERS TO THE DISCIPLINARY BRIGADE, WHETHER BY INTE-
GRATION INTO THE GENDARMERIE OR BY REINSTITUTING STREET
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PATROLS, IS UNLIKELY TO DIMINISH CRIME OR INCREASE THE ORDINARY
CITIZEN'S FEELINGS OF SECURITY. IT IS MORE LIKELY TO PROVOKE
RENEWED AND INTENSIFIED COMPLAINTS OF EXTORTION AND OTHER
FORMS OF CORRUPTION, PARTICULARLY SINCE ORDINARY GENDARMES
THEMSELVES HAVE A WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION FOR INDULGING IN
THESE PRACTICES.
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